

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/C:DWCOX
APPROVED BY M/CT:JKARKASIAN
ARA/AND:MRBARNEBEY (DRAFT)
M:SPIECZNIK
ARA:FMCNEIL
ACTION:FHANSEN
ACTION:JCAWLEY
CIA:WSTOELZEL (SUBS)
S/S:JETHYDEN

-----021181 011627Z /40

O 011614Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 286670

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, CASC, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: STARR KIDNAPPING

REF: BOGOTA 11059, 10991, 10990

1. WASHINGTON TASK FORCE (WTF) MET NOVEMBER 29 WITH
REGARD TO SORZANO'S NOVEMBER 25 MEETING WITH MANCHOLA AND
OCTOBER 25 FARC LETTER TO AMBASSADOR.

2. WTF WISHES TO COMMEND MISSION FOR TIMELY ACTION TO
CAUTION GOC AGAIN ABOUT MILITARY MISSIONS WHICH MIGHT
JEOPARDIZE STARR'S SAFETY. RESPONSE OF COLONEL YUSSEF IS
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REASSURING.

3. WTF BELIEVES THAT, BY CONTINUING TO PRESS DEMAND FOR
GUARACAS RELEASE AND THREATENING TO PUBLICIZE THIS DEMAND,
FARC IS ATTEMPTING TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN GOC AND USG.
WTF IS ENCOURAGED BY APPARENT DISPOSITION OF FARC NOT TO
TAKE PRECIPITATE ACTION AGAINST STARR AS LONG AS THERE IS

NO RESCUE ATTEMPT BY GOC MILITARY OR INVOLVEMENT OF "SECRET SERVICE" OR POLICE. ON OTHER HAND, THE FARC THREAT TO GO PUBLIC WITH ITS DEMAND WILL ESCALATE FARC'S PRESSURE AND WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED CAREFULLY BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

4. SUBJECT TO AMBASSADOR'S CONCURRENCE, WTF REQUESTS THAT AMBASSADOR (OR DCM, IF FACT THAT AMBASSADOR HAS NOT YET PRESENTED CREDENTIALS POSES PROBLEMS) MEET WITH FORMIN LIEVANO OR OTHER APPROPRIATE HIGH-LEVEL GOC OFFICIAL TO APPRISE GOC OF FARC LETTER TO AMBASSADOR AND CONSULT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF A RESPONSE TO THE FARC. WTF BELIEVES RESPONSE SHOULD BE GIVEN ORALLY BY SORZANO IN MEETING WITH VILLAMIL (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS). FEASIBILITY OF WRITTEN REPLY FROM AMBASSADOR WAS CONSIDERED BY WTF BUT WAS DISCARDED. IF EMBASSY AGREES, LIEVANO SHOULD BE TOLD THAT ORAL REPLY WILL BE PASSED ON TO FARC. IF EMBASSY BELIEVES WRITTEN REPLY WOULD BE PREFERABLE, WTF SHOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE MEETING WITH LIEVANO.

5. LIEVANO'S IDEAS WITH REGARD TO THE ORAL REPLY SHOULD BE SOLICITED. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO RAISE FOLLOWING POINTS WITH LIEVANO FOR INCLUSION IN OUR REPLY TO FARC:

-- WE ARE GRATIFIED TO HEAR FROM THE FARC THAT STARR IS IN GOOD HEALTH.

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-- IT SHOULD BE CLEAR TO THE FARC THAT IT IS NOT WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE USG TO DEAL WITH ITS DEMAND FOR THE RELEASE OF GUARACAS.

-- HOWEVER, WE DO HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO AGAIN INFORM THE FARC THAT THE MOTHER OF RICHARD STARR IS ANXIOUSLY WAITING TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE FARC THROUGH HER INTER-MEDIARY FOR HER SON'S SAFE RELEASE.

6. IN ADDITION, LIEVANO SHOULD BE INFORMED OF MANCHOLA'S STATEMENT THAT THE FARC IS AWAITING A "WRITTEN" REPLY FROM THE GOC TO THE OFFER OF A PRISONER EXCHANGE. WE SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, GIVE LIEVANO THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE PRESSING FOR A WRITTEN GOC REPLY.

7. WTF SOLICITS EMBASSY'S CURRENT EVALUATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GOC ACCEDING TO THE FARC DEMAND FOR THE RELEASE OF GUARACAS.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) UNLESS YOU PERCEIVE OBJECTION, PLEASE SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH LIEVANO OR OTHER HIGH-LEVEL

OFFICIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND MAKE POINTS CONTAINED IN
PARAS FOUR THROUGH SIX ABOVE. (B) PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR
EVALUATION OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE GOC'S ACCEDING TO THE
RELEASE OF GUARACAS. VANCE

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